

On a regular basis, this FAQ document about the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability will be updated. Questions have been chosen using multiple sources (e.g., Government of Canada, Toronto Public Health, Ontario College of Pharmacists, Ontario College of Family Physicians, St. Michael’s Family Health Team, etc.) and also from patient questions. Content will be added and updated so please check back regularly.

**Reviewed: Jan 24, 2022.**

### Table of Contents

<b>1. Who can get vaccinated and how to book an appointment? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Do I need a third dose of the COVID vaccine? Who should get a fourth dose? .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Which vaccine should I receive for my first, second and third dose, and when?.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. What should I know about the very rare adverse events reported for COVID-19 vaccines? ..</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. What is a vaccine passport, how can I prove I have both doses? .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. What are valid medical exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccines?.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7. Will Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TCFHT) be providing the COVID-19 vaccine?.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8. I have allergies, is it safe for me to get the vaccine?.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>9. Can I receive other vaccines at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>10. Can I take medication for pain after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine injection? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>11. How long after having had COVID-19 can one get the vaccine? .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>12. Should a patient who previously had COVID-19 receive the full course of the two-dose vaccine (versus a single dose only)?.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>13. Does the vaccine stop transmission of the virus? Can vaccinated people gather together with others who are vaccinated? .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>14. How long does the protection conferred by the vaccine(s) last? .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>15. What is the latest on vaccines for pregnant women? .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>16. Are you hesitant to get vaccinated? .....</b>	<b>10</b>

**COVID-19 Vaccines authorized for use by Health Canada:**

- Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty)
- Moderna (SpikeVax)
- Astra Zeneca (Vaxzevria)
- Janssen/Johnson & Johnson

**1. Who can get vaccinated and how to book an appointment?**

Visit the provincial website for regularly updated information.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/getting-covid-19-vaccine>

How to book your primary series of COVID-19 vaccine:

- Book an appointment at one of the mass immunization clinics through the [provincial booking system](#) or by calling 1-833-943-3900 (TTY 1-866-797-0007).
- Visit a [participating pharmacy](#) – please note each pharmacy may carry a different vaccine (Pfizer, Moderna or AstraZeneca); use the filters provided to determine which vaccine the pharmacies near you are carrying
- [CAMH](#)
- [Toronto Western Hospital \(TWH\)](#)
- See [City of Toronto’s site for 5-11 year old COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics](#)

**2. Do I need a third dose of the COVID vaccine? Who should get a fourth dose?**

Three doses of a COVID vaccine better protects you from getting and spreading the Omicron variant than two doses. Getting a third dose is important for all adults. Everyone 18 years of age and older can get a third dose 3 months after their second dose. It is especially important if you are: over 70 years of age, at risk because of a very weak immune system, pregnant, or received two doses of the AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccines.

People with a very weak immune system are now eligible for a fourth COVID vaccine 3 months after their third dose. Residents of long-term care and retirement homes and other congregate settings are also recommended to receive a fourth dose as they are at increased risk of both COVID-19 infection and severe disease, such as hospitalization and death.

Check the [provincial website](#) for eligibility for third and fourth doses (under booster section). See the following Ministry of Health documents for additional information pertaining to third and fourth dose recommendations in specific populations:

[COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations for Special Populations](#)

**3. Which vaccine should I receive for my first, second and third dose, and when?**

By Age Groups	First Dose	Second Dose	Third (and Fourth) Dose
Children (ages 5 to 11)	Pediatric Pfizer	Pediatric Pfizer	No recommendation at this time
Youth (ages 12 to 17)	Pfizer	Pfizer	No recommendation at this time

## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by: Jessica Lam, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physician

By Age Groups	First Dose	Second Dose	Third (and Fourth) Dose
Adults (ages 18 to 24)	Pfizer*	Pfizer or Moderna**	Pfizer or Moderna; See “Third and Fourth Dose Eligibility” below
Adults (ages 25 and up)	Pfizer or Moderna	Pfizer or Moderna	

- For parents who have questions about getting their children 5-11 years of age vaccinated, see [SickKids COVID-19 vaccine information for children FAQ page](#).
- You can safely switch between Moderna and Pfizer if the vaccine you received for your first dose is not available. Both vaccines for your second dose are safe and provide strong protection against COVID-19 including the Delta variant.
  - \*A preferential recommendation has been issued for the use of Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for individuals aged 18-24 years old due to an [observed increase in Ontario of the very rare heart condition called pericarditis/myocarditis](#) following vaccination with Moderna. For more information see Question 4.
  - \*\*Individuals aged 18-24 years old who received Moderna for their first dose can safely take Pfizer for their second dose, or can continue to take Moderna for their second dose with informed consent.
- Pfizer or Moderna is recommended for the third dose regardless of the vaccine received for the first and second doses.
- AstraZeneca is currently only available as a second dose for those that received it for their first dose, or those with contraindications to Pfizer or Moderna (mRNA) vaccines.
  - For those who received AstraZeneca for their first dose, NACI recommends Pfizer or Moderna (mRNA) vaccines as their second dose based on evidence of potentially better immune response as well as mitigating potential risk of rare adverse events associated with the AstraZeneca (viral vector) vaccine.
- Both AstraZeneca and Janssen viral vector COVID-19 vaccines are now available at Toronto City-run COVID-19 vaccine clinics for those that are unable to receive mRNA vaccines or have declined to receive mRNA vaccine following informed consent with their physician. Physician referral is required. Eligibility criteria for referral include:
  - 1) Individual is 18 years of age or older AND
  - 2) An allergist/immunologist/specialist assessment determined that individual has medical contraindication (including allergy) to mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.  
OR
  - 3) A physician has consulted with the individual to explain that a complete series with an MRNA COVID-19 vaccine is preferred over a viral vector vaccine and they have declined to receive mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

First dose	When can I receive my second dose?	When can I receive my third (and fourth) dose if eligible?
Moderna or Pfizer	3-8 weeks after* (for all age groups 5 years and up)	<u>Third Dose:</u> At least 3 months (84 days) after second dose

## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by: Jessica Lam, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physician

		<u>OR</u>
AstraZeneca	8 to 12 weeks after	At least 2 months (56 days) after second dose for moderately to severely immunocompromised individuals
		<u>Fourth Dose:</u> At least 3 months (84 days) after third dose for immunocompromised individuals

\*Note: For children 5-11 years of age, NACI continues to recommend an interval of at least 8 weeks between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> doses. If you are considering vaccinating your child at a shorter interval because of an underlying health condition or other reason, please discuss this with your child's primary health-care provider.

### Third Dose Eligibility

- Individuals born in 2003 or earlier (18 years of age or older) who received a second dose at least three months (84 days) ago, may now receive their booster dose at select pharmacies, hospitals, mobile clinics or participating primary care offices offering COVID-19 vaccines.
  - Those who have already booked their appointment at an interval of six months (168 days) can call the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 or through Ontario's booking portal to re-book for an earlier date at the three-month (84 days) interval.

### Fourth Dose Eligibility

- Residents of long-term care and retirement homes, and older adults living in other congregate settings are recommended to receive a fourth dose at least 3 months (84 days) after their third dose.
- Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised Individuals are now eligible for a fourth dose at least 3 months (84 days) after a third dose. These individuals include:
  - People undergoing active treatment for solid tumors and hematologic malignancies
  - Recipients of a solid-organ transplant and taking immunosuppressive therapy
  - Recipients of chimeric antigen receptor (CAR)-T-cell or hematopoietic stem cell transplant (within two years of transplantation or taking immunosuppression therapy)
  - People with moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (e.g. DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
  - People who have Stage 3 or advanced untreated HIV infection and people with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
  - People undergoing active treatment with the following categories of immunosuppressive therapies: high-dose systemic corticosteroids, alkylating agents, antimetabolites, tumor-necrosis (TNF) blockers, and anti-B cell therapies (monoclonal antibodies targeting CD19, CD20 and CD22. A list of these medications can be found

under **Table 1. List of Immunosuppressant Medications for Third Doses in the [COVID-19 Vaccine Third Dose Recommendations](#)** document

- **Note:** Individuals who are moderately to severely immunocompromised due to medications listed in **Table 1 of the COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations for Third Doses** or those taking other medications identified by their health care providers as significantly immunosuppressive do not need to provide proof of prescription/medication in order to receive their third dose at this time. However, proof is required to receive a 4<sup>th</sup> dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and may include one of:
  - Proof of the prescription (e.g., pharmacy medication record) (Do not bring the medications to the clinic as some medications may be toxic/hazardous to others and require special handling). If you do not have a pharmacy medication record, call your pharmacy to request one.
  - A referral form/letter from your doctor.

#### 4. What should I know about the very rare adverse events reported for COVID-19 vaccines?

##### Myocarditis and/or Pericarditis

The risk of heart complications such as myocarditis is much greater following COVID-19 infection compared to vaccination. Cases of myocarditis and/or pericarditis related to vaccines occur more often in adolescents and adults under 30 years of age, in males, and after a second dose of an mRNA vaccine. Most cases occur within seven days of vaccination. Vaccine safety surveillance data in Canada also suggest relatively higher rates of myocarditis and/or pericarditis reported after Moderna vaccination compared to Pfizer. For males aged 18-24 years old, the reporting rate for second dose Moderna was 263.2 per million doses compared to 37.4 per million doses in this group with second dose Pfizer. As a result, [Ontario Recommends the use of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for Individuals Aged 18-24 Years Old](#). The available data indicate that most of the affected individuals, even if hospitalized, experience relatively mild illness, respond well to treatment with the help of anti-inflammatory medication, and recover quickly. NACI, in considering the rare risks and known benefits of COVID-19 vaccines, continues to recommend vaccination with either Moderna or Pfizer (mRNA) vaccines for people 12 years of age and over, given the proven benefits of the vaccines in preventing severe illness and death.

For children aged 5 to 11, the number of participants in the clinical trial was not large enough to detect rare or very rare adverse events that may occur at a frequency less often than 1 in 1,000 people. No serious safety concerns and no cases of myocarditis and/or pericarditis related to the vaccine were reported. As a precaution, children who experience myocarditis and/or pericarditis after a first dose of the vaccine should wait to get a second dose until more information is available. Children who have a history of myocarditis unrelated to COVID-19 vaccination should speak with their doctor. It is advised to seek medical attention for children if they develop symptoms including chest pain, shortness of breath, or palpitations after they receive a COVID-19 vaccine. For more information, visit the [Canadian Paediatric Society](#).

##### Vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT)

## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by: Jessica Lam, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physician

VITT involves increased risk of blood clots and low blood platelets. The risk of VITT is associated with viral vector vaccines (AstraZeneca, Janssen). Internationally, the rate of this adverse event is still to be confirmed but has been most commonly estimated to be between 1/26,000 and 1/100,000 people vaccinated with AstraZeneca vaccine. The rate of VITT in Canada after a first dose has been estimated to be approximately 1 per 55,000 doses given. There is no known risk of blood clots or VITT with Moderna or Pfizer.

### References:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/news/2021/10/statement-from-the-council-of-chief-medical-officers-of-health-ccmoh-update-on-covid-19-vaccines-and-the-risk-of-myocarditis-and-pericarditis.html>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/vaccines/2021/06/covid-19-mrna-vaccines-myocarditis-pericarditis.pdf?la=en>

[https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19\\_vaccine\\_info\\_AZ\\_2nd\\_dose.pdf](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_vaccine_info_AZ_2nd_dose.pdf)

### **5. What is a vaccine passport, how can I prove I have both doses?**

A vaccine passport, or more commonly known as an immunization record, is documentation that you have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. After you are vaccinated, you can log in to the [provincial portal](#) to download or print an enhanced vaccine certificate, which is an easier and more convenient way to provide your proof of vaccination. Each enhanced vaccine certificate contains a SMART® Health Card QR code that businesses can easily scan at the door. No app is required. For those who live in Toronto and received a first or second dose outside Ontario, please document your vaccine in the [Toronto Public Health's online Portal](#).

### **6. What are valid medical exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccines?**

There are only a few valid medical exemptions to receiving the COVID-19 vaccines:

1. Known severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis to a component of a COVID-19 vaccine or following receipt of a COVID-19 vaccine as documented and evaluated by an allergist/immunologist; Qualifies for medical exemption if:
  - Discussion with appropriate physician or nurse practitioner has occurred on potential options for immunization with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine; AND
  - Physician or nurse practitioner has determined that the individual is unable to receive any COVID-19 vaccine.
2. An Individual with a history of myocarditis unrelated to mRNA COVID-19 vaccine should consult their health provider; Qualifies for medical exemption if:
  - Discussion with appropriate physician or nurse practitioner has occurred on potential options for immunization with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine; AND
  - Physician or nurse practitioner has determined that the individual is unable to receive any COVID-19 vaccine.
3. An individual diagnosed with myocarditis and/or pericarditis following receipt of their first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine; Qualifies for medical exemption if:

## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by: Jessica Lam, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physician

- Myocarditis/pericarditis was diagnosed within 6 weeks of receiving a previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine after medical evaluation (e.g. ER physician, relevant physician).
- In situations where there is uncertainty regarding myocarditis/pericarditis diagnosis, discussion should occur with a relevant specialist on potential options for (re)immunization with the same or alternative COVID-19 vaccine, including a risk-benefit analysis for the individual. The individual qualifies for a medical exemption if the specialist has determined the individual is unable to receive any COVID-19 vaccine.
- Can be immunized once they are symptom-free and at least 90 days has passed since vaccination.

### 7. Will Taddle Creek Family Health Team (TCFHT) be providing the COVID-19 vaccine?

TC FHT is not providing the COVID-19 vaccine in our offices at this time.

### 8. I have allergies, is it safe for me to get the vaccine?

Over 57 million COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Canada as of October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Serious adverse events and anaphylaxis are very rare with the COVID-19 vaccines, occurring in only 0.009% of doses given. Unless you have a history of allergic reaction to components of the vaccine, or to the first dose of the vaccine, Health Canada recommends vaccination.

When you receive a vaccination, it is always advised to wait at least 15 minutes after receiving a vaccine, since an allergic reaction or anaphylaxis is possible. For those with a history of allergies, even to food, pets or other non-medical causes, waiting 30 minutes after receiving a vaccine is recommended.

By clicking the vaccine name below you can review the vaccine ingredients in non-medical terms and [learn more about polyethylene glycol](#).

[Pfizer-BioNTech](#)

[Moderna](#)

[AstraZeneca](#)

[Janssen/Johnson & Johnson](#)

[Reference:](#)

Centre for Effective Practice: <https://tools.cep.health/tool/covid-19-vaccines/#allergicreaction>

### 9. Can I receive other vaccines at the same time as the COVID-19 vaccine?

It is recommended that COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 should not be given at the same time with other vaccines (live or inactivated). At this time, NACI recommends that children receive the pediatric Pfizer vaccine at least 14 days before or after another vaccine. This is a precaution to help to determine if a side effect that may arise is due to the COVID-19 vaccine or

## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by: Jessica Lam, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physician

another vaccine. There may be circumstances when a dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and another vaccine need to be given at the same time – a healthcare provider can help with this decision.

As a precaution in individuals 12 years of age and older, it was previously recommended that COVID-19 vaccines be given at least 28 days before and 14 days after other vaccines. After reviewing the evolving evidence on COVID-19 vaccine NACI and Toronto Public Health now recommends that: COVID-19 vaccines may be given at the same time as, or any time before or after, other vaccines, including live, non-live, adjuvanted or unadjuvanted vaccines. This would include the flu shot.

Reference: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines/summary-updates-september-28-2021.html>

### **10. Can I take medication for pain after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine injection?**

Side effects such as shoulder pain or fever are generally mild and should only last a few days. Applying a cool damp cloth where the vaccine was given may help with soreness.

If needed, you may use over-the-counter medicine such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, acetylsalicylic acid (ASA), or antihistamines for any pain and discomfort you may experience after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, and you have no other medical reasons that prevent you from taking these medications. It is not recommended to take these medications before vaccination for the purpose of trying to prevent side effects.

### **11. How long after having had COVID-19 can one get the vaccine?**

While there is not a mandatory waiting period between having COVID-19 disease and being immunized, it is recommended that people wait until they are feeling better, with no symptoms of a new illness (such as recent fever or cough).

Additionally, symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who have been advised to self-isolate due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection or due to close contact with a COVID-19 case should not attend a vaccine clinic and should wait to get their vaccine until their isolation period is over.

Children with previous COVID-19 infection may be offered two doses of the pediatric Pfizer vaccine once symptoms of acute illness have resolved and the child is no longer considered infectious.

Unofficially, many specialists are suggesting to wait 4 to 8 weeks after illness to receive the vaccine since having Covid-19 infection gives a temporary boost in immunity.



## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by: Jessica Lam, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physician

### **12. Should a patient who previously had COVID-19 receive the full course of the two-dose vaccine (versus a single dose only)?**

For now, those who have previously had COVID should get a full course of the vaccine. It is still uncertain how long protection or immunity against the COVID-19 virus will last in these individuals.

### **13. Does the vaccine stop transmission of the virus? Can vaccinated people gather together with others who are vaccinated?**

Although the vaccine will protect you, at this time it hasn't been proven that getting vaccinated will stop you from carrying the virus and possibly infecting others.

[The Public Health Agency of Canada](#) has provided guidance on what being vaccinated against Covid-19 means for you. You still need to follow [Toronto Public Health advice for](#) public settings (workplaces, public transit) which include physical distancing, wearing a mask and hand hygiene.

Please note that you are partially protected 14 days after the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and you are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after your second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

### **14. How long does the protection conferred by the vaccine(s) last?**

Because the vaccines are relatively new, we don't know for sure how long the vaccines are protective and whether/when a booster may be needed. Information is being collected now in real time and research is ongoing to determine how long immunogenicity lasts.

### **15. What is the latest on vaccines for pregnant women?**

Vaccination among pregnant women is not as high as in other populations despite their risk for severe illness if infected with COVID-19. The Ontario Ministry of Health strongly encourages pregnant women to get vaccinated, including their third dose. The COVID-19 vaccine will provide strong protection against COVID-19 and help prevent passing it from mother to baby and other family members.

Several studies have demonstrated that vaccination in pregnancy has no impact on pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage, premature birth, fetal growth restriction and high blood pressure during pregnancy. Vaccination in pregnancy was also found to have no impact on medical complications of pregnancy or maternal death.

In contrast, COVID-19 infection in pregnancy significantly increases the risk of stillbirth, premature birth, high blood pressure, caesarean delivery, low birth weight and the need to admit baby to neonatal intensive care.

It is safe to get the COVID-19 vaccine while breastfeeding, and there is no need to stop or delay breastfeeding after getting vaccinated. If you get vaccinated while breastfeeding, the vaccine

## COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Compiled by: Jessica Lam, PharmD, RPh - TC FHT Clinical Pharmacist

Reviewed By: Exec. Dir./Lead Physician

itself will not transfer into breastmilk, but studies suggest that the antibodies you produce following vaccination will, which may protect infants from COVID-19.

While there have been no safety issues with pregnancy or breastfeeding with any COVID-19 vaccine, NACI preferentially recommends receiving an mRNA vaccine as there is more real-world evidence supporting its use in this population.

[See COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy](#) for additional information.

### 16. Are you hesitant to get vaccinated?

We understand that the decision to get vaccinated can be confusing with all of the information out there.

If you would like to speak to someone about COVID-19 vaccines, make an appointment with a Taddle Creek physician, nurse practitioner, pharmacist or nurse. If you would like to have a more in depth, judgement-free discussion with expert doctors about COVID-19 vaccines, we suggest making an appointment with the [Scarborough Health Network – VaxFacts](#). They are ready to talk, listen and help you get the most accurate information. The Hospital for Sick Children offers a similar service for children and their families. You can book an appointment by calling 1-888-304-6558 or online at:

<https://www.sickkids.ca/en/care-services/support-services/covid-19-vaccine-consult/>.

---

In summary, the vaccines are safe and effective. We will continue to monitor the vaccine rollout and provide you with the most relevant science-based information as soon as it is available to us.

Please remember, our healthcare professionals and offices remain accessible to you by phone or in person visits (if deemed necessary). Thank you all for what you have done to keep yourselves, your loved ones, and your communities safe.